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ABSTRACT

This training guide is designed to enhance the skills of Head Start staff in nurturing children by attending to them and interacting with them so they are safe as they grow and develop. Each of the guide's modules details module outcomes, key concepts, and background information. Module 1 addresses tuning in to children, focusing on building the staff's ability to: identify how their role influences children's development; understand children's basic developmental needs; apply basic child development principles and sound child development practices; and talk with other staff and parents about individual children. Module 2 addresses interacting with children, focusing on enhancing the staff's ability to listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests. Increasing staff skills in talking with children in ways that support a positive sense of self and address individual needs is also examined. Module 3 addresses nurturing children through families, and encourages staff to identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children. Contains resources. (SD)

HEAD START®

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Nurturing Children

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

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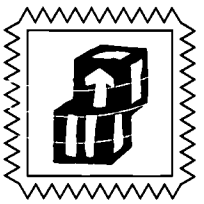
You're Invited to Special Training—



Training: Nurturing Children

Where: The Learning Place

When: Now... and tomorrow

Why: Enhance your skills to help children thrive and achieve. . .

Won't you join us in the adventure of learning about our children?

Your Head Start Team

21st Century Head Start Community

100 Diversity Avenue

Quality, Promise 21000

Nurturing is natural, but the skills are learned.

This foundation guide provides the opportunity for the Head Start community to refine the skills that nurture children through training. These skills will help members of the community assure children that they are safe, trusted, cared for, and supported as they move toward independence and competence.

Each member of the Head Start community, whether a parent, home visitor, teacher, cook, bus driver, coordinator, volunteer, or consultant, generally brings to the job several key characteristics:

- A genuine interest in children
- An active commitment to families
- A sensitive and responsive disposition
- A belief in lifelong learning and personal growth

These characteristics, combined with interesting, stimulating, skill-based training, can lead to highly qualified, energized staff. The sessions in this training guide will help participants focus and expand their natural capacities for nurturing. Staff will increase their abilities to communicate with parents, children, and one another. They will appreciate the steps toward growth and learning that children take each day—and they will appreciate their own roles in supporting this growth and learning.

The management team has an opportunity, through staff development, to demonstrate the kind of nurturing and support that fosters human growth by:

- Acknowledging the strengths of their staff
- Creating an environment that encourages good communication and shared problem-solving
- Showing an interest in child development and providing opportunities for staff to gain the knowledge to do what is right

You will give very appreciated support to participants as they strive to increase their skills. Perhaps most importantly, you will be model nurturers.

Overview

Purpose

This foundation guide is designed to enhance the skills of all Head Start staff in nurturing children. Nurturing children means carefully attending to them and interacting with them so that they are safe as they grow and develop. Because children's families, community, and culture are so central to their development, nurturing children also means nurturing families.

Outcomes

After completing this training, staff will meet the following guide outcomes as they use child development principles to nurture children:

- Recognize that children are individuals—noticing who they are and where they are in their development
- Interact with children in ways that keep them safe while encouraging them to develop critical thinking skills
- Nurture children through their families, who are the center of their world and have the strongest influence on them

Nurturing children begins by understanding the unique world of childhood. The more adults know about children—how they develop, how they think, what they need from others, and what they can do for themselves—the more interesting children become. Where once you might have been a careful observer of children, you are now a deeply interested observer. Where once you might have noticed a child's gain, now you delight in it, and this delight gets communicated to parents. When parents hear that they have wonderful children, they feel better about themselves as parents and become better parents. This is a positive cycle of events: dedicated, observant adults admiring children, who, in response, do even more admirable things.

In addition to learning from their own observations of children, adults can also learn about child development by reading the resource materials listed at the end of this guide. These resources contain much more information than a training guide of this length can provide and will enrich the knowledge of the trainer and participants.

Audience

Head Start is a community-oriented program. Each staff member influences the development of children through interactions with them and their families. This foundation guide builds the basic skills that each staff member needs to be a nurturing, productive, helpful, and resourceful member of the Head Start learning community of families and children.

Introduction

Performance Standards

This guide supports the Head Start Program Performance Standards objectives for Education Services. These include providing a learning environment for children that helps them develop socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development toward the overall goal of social competence. The Performance Standards call for integrating educational aspects of all objectives into the daily program, supporting families of the children, and having an education plan that encourages staff and parents to learn more about children's development, needs, and activities.

Organization

This **foundation guide,** *Nurturing Children,* provides all staff in Head Start with a systematic method for refining their skills to care for children while ensuring their safety. This guide trains staff to conduct nurturing and supportive interactions with children and their families. *Nurturing Children* strongly emphasizes families, the children's first teachers, and an appreciation of the diverse and unique nature of the children, staff, and families who make up the Head Start community.

Participants will meet these **guide outcomes** once the activities in *Nurturing Children* are completed:

- Recognize that children are individuals—notice who they are and where they are in their development
- Interact with children in ways that keep them safe while encouraging them to develop a sense of autonomy
- Nurture children through positive interactions with their families, who are at the center of their world and have the strongest influence on them

Each module includes **module outcomes,** key concepts, and background information. The **module outcomes** are based on the **guide outcomes.** *Nurturing Children* contains the following modules:

- **Module 1:** *Tuning In to Children*

  This module builds the staff's ability to identify how their role influences children's development, to understand children's basic developmental needs, to apply basic child development principles and sound child development practices, and to talk with other staff and parents about individual children.

- **Module 2:** *Interacting with Children*

  This module enhances the staff's ability to listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests. It also increases their skills in talking with children in ways that support a positive sense of self and address their individual needs.

- **Module 3:** *Nurturing Children through Families*

  This module encourages staff to identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

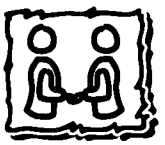
Each module has specific outcomes for participants to achieve, and each activity is designed to fulfill one or more of the outcomes. For easy reference, the outcomes are listed with the activity. In addition, the **Next Steps,** the last activity for each module, introduces a unique staff development tool, the **portfolio**, a living document of one's professional growth and achievement. The material that is developed and added to the individual's collection is an important tool for self-evaluation and demonstrates to others one's professional growth.

The **Key Concepts** section appears in every module of the guide and summarizes the main ideas contained within each module. The Key Concepts are discussed more explicitly in the **Background Information** section of each module. The trainer may choose to present the Background Information section as a mini-lecture or as handouts or overheads in the coaching or workshop sessions.

The **Resources** section is at the end of the guide. It contains additional materials that can be consulted for further information on the topics in the modules.

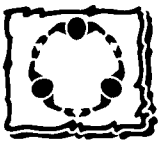
Definition of Icons

Coaching



A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach to work closely with one to three participants.

Workshop



A facilitated group training strategy that fosters the development of skills through activities that build on learning through group interaction. These activities are written for up to 25 participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.

Next Steps:
Ideas to Extend Practice

Activities assigned by the trainer immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward expected outcomes of the module.

Continuing
Professional Development

Follow-up activities for the program to support continued staff development in the regular use of the skills addressed in a particular training guide. It includes:

(1) Opportunities tailored to the participant to continue building on the skills learned in the training

(2) Ways to identify new skills and knowledge needed to expand and/or complement these skills through opportunities in such areas as in higher education, credentialing, or community educational programs

At A Glance

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 1: Tuning In to Children	(W) Activity 1–1: Things I Enjoy Doing with Children	30 minutes	Discussion activity
	(W) Activity 1–2: Opportunities for Nurturing Children	25 minutes	*Handout 1: Opportunities for Nurturing Children*
	(C) Activity 1–3: Opportunity Knocks	45 minutes	*Handout 2: Opportunity Knocks*
	(W) Activity 1–4: Meeting Children's Needs	40 minutes	*Handout 3: Vignettes*
	(W) Activity 1–5: Growth Is Sequential	25 minutes	Developmental milestones written on 3 x 5 index cards
	(C) Activity 1–6: Child Development in Action	40 minutes	*Handout 4: Child Development in Action*
	(W) Activity 1–7: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?	30 minutes	*Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?*
	(C) Activity 1–8: Getting to Know You	30 minutes	Discussion activity
	(C) Activity 1–9: Tour Guide	1–2 hours	Discussion activity
	(W) Activity 1–10: Peeling Labels	15–20 minutes	*Handout 6: Peeling Labels*
Module 2: Interacting with Children	(W) Activity 2–1: What Do You Think?	30–40 minutes	*Handout 7: What Do You Think?*
	(C) Activity 2–2: Listening Talk	15 minutes	Statements printed on 3 x 5 index cards
	(W) Activity 2–3: More Listening Talk	20 minutes	Circumstances printed on 3 x 5 index cards
	(C) Activity 2–4: Hey, Wait a Minute!	2 hours	Stopwatch

Module	Activity	Time	Materials
Module 2: Interacting with Children (Continued)	(W) Activity 2–5: A Time to Wait	30 minutes	Discussion activity
	(W) Activity 2–6: Nobody Likes Me	20–25 minutes	3 x 5 index cards
	(W) Activity 2–7: Turning the Words Around	25 minutes	*Handout 8: Turning the Words Around*
	(C) Activity 2–8: Praise vs. Encouragement	10 minutes	*Handout 9: Praise vs. Encouragement*
	(C) Activity 2–9: Asking Children Questions	15 minutes	Discussion activity
Module 3: Nurturing Children through Families	(W) Activity 3–1: Where Do You Stand?	10 minutes	List of statements
	(W) Activity 3–2: Parent Panel	40–60 minutes	Panelists
	(W) Activity 3–3: Both Sides Now	30 minutes	Discussion activity
	(C) Activity 3–4: Situation Cards	30 minutes	*Handout 10: Situation Cards*
	(W) Activity 3–5: Principles and Practice	45 minutes	*Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families* *Handout 12: Real Quotes from Real People—What's Wrong Here?*
	(W) Activity 3–6: Applying Principles	45 minutes	*Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families*
	(C) Activity 3–7: Self-Evaluation	45 minutes	*Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families*
	(W) Activity 3–8: Family Contacts	30 minutes	Form from *Model Family Needs Assessment Process*

C = Coaching Activities W = Workshop Activities

Tuning In to Children

In this module, participants learn how to tune in to children by learning important child development principles, recognizing how to meet the individual child's developmental needs, and sharing nurturing practices with other staff and parents.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, the staff will be able to:

- Identify their specific role in influencing children's development
- Identify children's basic developmental needs
- Apply basic child development principles in their work with children

Key Concepts

- Talk with parents and other staff about individual children and sound child development practices
- All adults have an important role in nurturing children.
- Important child development principles include the following:
  - Development is interrelated and sequential and influenced by multiple factors, such as temperament, health, nature, culture, and family.
  - Developmental domains—physical, cognitive, social, and emotional—are interrelated.
  - Children have unique ways of thinking and looking at the world.
  - Children are developing trust, independence, and self-concept.
  - Children construct their own knowledge.
  - Children learn by interacting with others and their environment.
  - Young children must be provided with caring supervision and safe environments based on their stage of development.
- Adult expectations must be guided by knowing individual children as well as general information about development.

- Successful Head Start programs build upon the strengths of children and families in their program *and* upon shared understandings of child development by the staff.

- Early childhood is usually defined by the following age categories/ stages:

  — Young infants (birth to eight months)
  — Mobile infants (eight to eighteen months)
  — Toddlers (eighteen months to three years)
  — Preschoolers (three to five years)

Background Information

Childhood is a very special time and valuable for its own experiences. It is not simply a way station or preparation for adult life. It is a time when children figure out and take stock of their world—a time when adults play a vital role in confirming that the world is a safe and welcoming place.

Adults teach children, whether they plan to or not, and adults have the opportunity to nurture children and help them along in their growing up. Adults can begin by tuning in to children, reflecting on what childhood is like, and considering individual children in their personal and professional lives. Adults have many opportunities to nurture infants and children who are at various ages and stages: young infants (birth to eight months), mobile infants (eight to eighteen months), toddlers (eighteen months to three years), and preschoolers (three to five years).

Tuning in to children requires a basic understanding of child development. Generally speaking, **children develop in a predictable sequence:** crawling before walking, babbling before speaking, and playing alone before playing with others. With nurturing, caring adults and safe, stimulating environments, children can grow and develop into progressively more competent beings.

Children vary greatly in their individual development. Therefore, skilled adults must observe children carefully to appreciate the uniqueness of each child's strengths and abilities. The interplay of several key influences on development contributes to individual differences among children.

Influences on Development

Some key influences on a child's development are:

- Health
- Temperament
- Culture
- Family

Adequate nutrition, rest, and medical attention are just a few of the variables that contribute to a child's overall **health**: a major factor in growth and development. Clearly, a child's physical development depends on good health, but health plays a role in other aspects of development as well. A child who is hungry or ill is less likely to lose herself in play, focus on an interesting experience, or join enthusiastically in a game.

A child's **temperament**—shy or outgoing, active or quiet, easily upset or more calm—also plays a role in development. Temperament influences both the choices a child makes as well as the child's basic response to given situations.

Children are conditioned by **culture** and by **family**. The values and expectations of those around growing children powerfully influence development. Issues ranging from physical movement to gender roles are strongly impacted. This is one reason to be cautious when describing any *universal* way that development unfolds.

Four Developmental Domains

Children develop in four areas: **physical**, **cognitive**, **social**, and **emotional**. Skilled early childhood staff observe that *development in each of these domains is interrelated* and occurs simultaneously. A child on the playground is using muscles (physical), figuring out how to climb higher (cognitive), bringing other children to watch (social), and feeling ambivalent about climbing higher (emotional). It is useful to think about the different domains in order to understand the different ways children develop, but in reality activities always overlap. There is no such thing as a purely physical or purely cognitive experience for a child. Physical activity requires thought; thought is accompanied by interaction; and both build competence and positive self-concept.

Interacting with children requires that an adult respect and remember that children have unique ways of thinking. Young children do not think like little adults, nor should they. Children are very literal (if you have *sharp eyes*, they might poke you). They think objects are alive (dolls must not be smothered). They assume that if two things happen at once, one caused the other (honking makes the car go; lightning makes it rain). Children are trying very hard to make sense of the world, deciding into which categories things go. (He cannot be a daddy; he is a police officer.) Their thinking processes need to be encouraged and delighted in, not corrected.

Children's Developmental Goals

Most adults recognize children's basic physical needs such as warmth, shelter, and adequate nutrition. Equally important are other developmental needs that must be met so that children can accomplish the important tasks of early life. Children are **developing trust** and learning that they can count on people and feel safe. They are **learning to be independent**, to think for themselves, and to make choices. Also, they are learning to feel good about themselves, to feel like competent beings who can make a

difference, construct their own knowledge, and care for others. They are **building a positive self-concept.**

Children develop a sense of **trust** when the adults who care for them let them know that they are valued human beings. This leads to positive feelings about themselves and the rest of the world. A sense of trust allows children to explore the world, try out new things, and interact with other children and adults.

A sense of **independence** allows children to do things for themselves and make decisions. Their sense of trust in adults and in their environment allows them to feel safe enough to try new things.

A **positive self-concept** comes from a child's growing sense of competence through experience and interaction with significant people in their daily lives. Children acquire this competence when they explore an interesting environment in which their concerns and interests are taken seriously on a day-to-day and minute-to-minute basis. An important role for adults is to provide a stimulating environment and to interact respectfully with children. This kind of setting does more to foster a positive self-concept than do reams of paper detailing trivial attributes of what makes a child special.

Child development principles help adults understand and appreciate the growth of children. Adult interventions are helpful if they focus on developmental goals: building trust, promoting independence, and encouraging a positive self-concept. These long-term goals take children much further than short-term goals such as mastering how to use crayons or memorizing songs.

How Children Learn

When children **construct their own knowledge**, they make their own assumptions based on what they already know. They seek experiences that fit with where they are developmentally and put together their own ideas about how the world works.

Children do not learn by sitting quietly as vessels to receive knowledge; they learn by vigorous, adventuresome **interaction with others** and with their environment. This happens mainly through play because children's natural curiosity causes them to observe, explore, and experiment with the people and things around them. Therefore, environments need to be safe, stimulate their needs, and be staffed by adults who value language, experimentation, exploration, and inquisitive behavior.

Using Developmental Milestones Correctly

The sequential, developmental stages or milestones that mark children's development can be useful. Such information helps adults have appropriate expectations for children. When expectations are too high (for example, expecting a two-year-old to trace letters), the result can be a

frustrated child and adult. When expectations are too low (for example, continuing to feed a child who is easily able to take finger foods), development can be hindered. However, adults can learn what to expect from children by accurately and objectively observing them. The process of observing individual children—seeing what they can do easily and what they are trying to learn—is vastly superior to *only* checking a child's progress against a developmental chart or list. The age-related milestones are useful to staff because they serve as a point of reference against which staff can evaluate a particular child's progress. It is important not to pigeonhole a child or to make assumptions about what she can or cannot do based *only* on age.

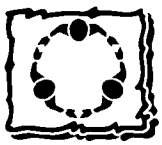
In fact, focusing on the accomplishment of age-specific milestones, which can be culturally weighted, tends to highlight what is missing rather than what has been done. Instead, if you think about who *this child* is and what *she* can do, then you will be on the right track to accommodating diverse expressions of development and recognizing and building on the child's strengths.

Sharing Information

In addition to knowing and implementing child development principles, an important goal for Head Start staff is to share these principles and understand how they work with other staff and parents. This means having the information, the confidence, and the ability to explain your goals for children and how they are being met. When all adults share a sound and common philosophy about nurturing, the outcome for children can only be positive.

Finally, it is vital to remember that Head Start programs positively influence the development of children through their families. This means supporting parents in their primary role and helping them as they nurture their children. You can best accomplish this by focusing on the unique strengths of each parent and family. By noting what each family can offer, you have a starting place for establishing your relationship with them and, more importantly, supporting their relationship with their child.

Activity 1–1: Things I Enjoy Doing with Children



Purpose: In this activity, participants will get to know each other and begin thinking about ensuring children's safety and working with them and their families.

Outcome:

Participants identify their specific role in influencing children's development.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers

1. Ask each participant to share with the group some things that she or he particularly enjoys doing with children while keeping them safe. Emphasize that staff awareness of the safety of children is a key element in a quality early childhood program.

   Stress that this activity is wide open—they can discuss activities they enjoy doing with children in the program, their own children, grandchildren, neighborhood children, or any other children. The object is to recall pleasant memories of children and adults doing things together. Note their responses on chart paper.

2. As individuals tell their stories, ask for more detail.

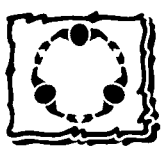
   What ages of children do you like to sing with?
   What part of the zoo do you find kids really like?
   What is it about the old days that you like to tell?

3. Sum up responses by age group and point out the variety of activities and similarities, such as a large number of the participants enjoy being outdoors. Typically, the range of responses will provide a good idea of the elements of an early childhood program. The variety of activities, from reading to music to walks to informal chats, will involve all aspects of child development. Indicate which activities involve physical development, social interaction, learning, and emotional support.

   Point out the balance between quiet one-on-one activities, such as reading to children, and the noisier, group activities such as zoo trips or cooking.

   Participants may be surprised to hear that they are already providing very high quality early childhood experiences. Make the final point that any activity that brings adults and children together in positive interaction is not only enjoyable for the adults, but nurturing to the children.

Activity 1–2: Opportunities for Nurturing Children



Purpose: In this activity, participants will explore the opportunities they have to nurture children and keep them safe.

Outcome:

Participants identify their specific role in influencing children's development.

Materials:

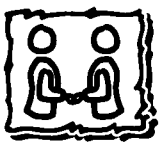
Chart paper, markers
Handout 1: Opportunities for Nurturing Children

1. Distribute *Handout 1: Opportunities for Nurturing Children.*[1] Ask each person to read the handout. Then explain that these practices are generic and take place in all settings—on the bus, at home, in the center, on field trips. Tell the participants to think about each listed activity. Ask them to check whether each item is something they can actually do (**practice**), or something they frequently can watch (**observe**), or something they occasionally talk about (**describe**), formally or informally with other staff or parents.

2. After the exercise is completed, ask participants to form small groups with those who have similar jobs and to discuss the multiple influences upon children's growth. They should discuss and explore the specific opportunities that they have to nurture and keep the children in their program safe.

3. Ask each participant to develop a plan to expand personal practices that includes at least two to three items from each part of the list. Have them share their plans in their groups. (By doing this, participants may expand their plans with input from others. For example, two bus drivers may decide that they have the opportunity to give positively worded directions, and not just constant *Nos*. This approach can now become a practice of theirs and not just something that they heard.) Have each participant identify a partner in a similar job, with whom they will share progress in two weeks.

Activity 1–3: Opportunity Knocks



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will identify personal opportunities to nurture children.

Outcome:

Participants identify their specific role in influencing children's development.

Materials:

Chart paper, pens
Handout 2: Opportunity Knocks

[1] Adapted from Bredekamp, Sue, ed. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8: Expanded Edition* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992).

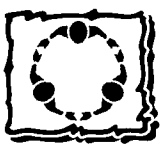
1. *Distribute Handout 2: Opportunity Knocks.*[2] Ask the participant to determine if he is making the most of nurturing opportunities by reading each item and checking whether it is done *always, sometimes,* or *never.*

2. Review the items checked *always.* Ask such questions as, *How do you remind yourself to remain patient? Do you identify with the child, or are you just a patient person?*

3. Ask about the items that were checked *never. Are they checked* never *because the opportunity never arises, or because the skill needs to be developed?*

4. Follow up with additional resources related to skill opportunities that did not occur but are still important. For example, *We have wonderful materials on children's play in our staff library. I'd like you to review a couple of them, so that we can discuss play at our next session.*

Activity 1–4: Meeting Children's Needs



Purpose: In this activity, participants will learn specific ways in which they can meet children's developmental needs, keep them safe, and help children recognize and work through conflicts.

Outcome:

Participants identify children's basic developmental needs.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Handout 3: Vignettes

1. Share and discuss the Background Information on trust, independence, and self-concept found at the beginning of this module.

   Ask participants for ways that adults can help children develop a sense of **trust.** Examples can include:

   - Holding a child's hand while he climbs a ladder to the slide, or keeping a promise to push a child on a swing no higher than she wants to go

   - Letting a child know in advance when the daily schedule will change

[2] Adapted from Bredekamp, Sue, ed. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8: Expanded Edition* (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992).

- Responding to a child's cries even when the child is crying *to get attention* (A quick and consistent response helps the child know that his needs are important and will be addressed.)

Ask the participants for ways that adults can help children to develop **independence.** Examples can include:

- Providing activities with no beginning or end and no right or wrong way to do them
- Emphasizing process over product
- Allowing children to make their own decisions
- Allowing them to make mistakes
- Doing everything possible to help children be successful in all of their efforts
- Giving children many opportunities to solve problems without pressure

Ask participants for ways that adults can help children to develop a **positive self-concept.** Examples can include:

- Listening with interest as children express their thoughts and feelings
- Giving children many opportunities to solve problems
- Allowing children to pursue their interests at their own pace without pushing them to learn academic material such as arithmetic and reading before they are ready

2. Use *Handout 3: Vignettes* to explore the concepts of **trust, independence,** and **positive self-concept** with small groups.

3. Ask participants to discuss one or two vignettes from their real-life experiences with children that illustrate dilemmas when helping children to acquire trust, independence, and positive self-concept. Discuss these real-life examples the next time the group meets.

Activity 1–5: Growth Is Sequential

Purpose: In this activity, participants will focus on recognizing the sequential nature of children's growth and consider the dual influences of nature and nurturing upon development.

Outcome:

Participants apply basic child development principles in their work with children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Developmental milestones written on 3 x 5 index cards

1. To prepare for this activity, you will need to make developmental milestone cards. One way to do this is to record on index cards the key milestones in a given domain accomplished in the first five years of life. You can use the milestones listed in any basic child development resource, such as *Essentials for Child Development Associates Working with Young Children* (refer to the Resources section), by copying the appropriate pages and placing one milestone (statement or image) on each card. You can color-code the cards if you want to use milestones in more than one domain. Place the cards in a large open container.

2. Depending on the size of the group, ask participants to select one or more cards. Then use the reference material to put the milestones in sequential order.

   For example, some key milestones for physical development that you might include are:

Holds head up	Jumps with both feet in place
Rolls over	Walks up stairs one step at a time
Sits up alone	Rides a tricycle
Creeps on all fours	Hops on one foot
Stands up	Skips
Walks	Stands and jumps
Creeps up steps	Climbs well
Runs easily	Jumps rope

3. Lead a discussion with the group. Some interesting questions to ask about developmental milestones include the following:

   Is the milestone taught or does it happen naturally with some support?

How do babies learn to crawl?

Do we have to motivate a toddler to explore?

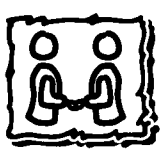
4. Tie the discussion into the participants' real work experiences. Remind them that safety is primary and that there is a relationship between the environment and how each child will naturally develop. It is important to remember that:

   - Many skills children acquire cannot be taught.
   - Many milestones do not apply to children in various cultures or to children with disabilities.
   - An *ages and stages* list can obscure a view of a real child. A child is much more interesting than a checklist of acquired skills.

   However, it is useful to consider milestones because they can be used as guidelines to children's growth and development. Children do not develop in lockstep, but nonetheless do develop.

5. Ask participants to each think of a specific child to observe when they return to their programs. Explain that they are to make accurate and objective observations on one particular domain: physical, cognitive, social, or emotional. Ask them to make notes at least once a week about their observations of children's progress in the domain they chose. Participants should note what the child is doing and how the child grows and changes. Ask them to continue to observe the child for a period of at least three months. Then, have them review their notes to put together a sequence of development for the particular area, noting any milestones that were achieved, such as those that are given in this workshop. Have participants share their results with a colleague.

Activity 1–6: Child Development in Action



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will understand the connection between the theoretical principles of child development and actual work with children.

Outcome:

Participants apply basic child development principles in their work with children.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Handout 4: Child Development in Action

1. Review with the participant the child development principles outlined below:

   Child Development Principles

   - Development is sequential and influenced by a variety of factors such as nature and nurturing.
   - Developmental domains—physical, cognitive, social, and emotional—are interrelated.
   - Children have unique ways of thinking and looking at their world.
   - Children are developing trust, independence, and self-concept.
   - Children construct their own knowledge.
   - Children learn through interaction with others and with their environment.
   - Young children must be provided caring supervision and safe environments during stages of development.

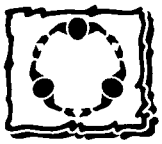
2. Give the participant cards or small pieces of paper containing the sample children's actions and statements from *Handout 4: Child Development in Action.* Ask the participant to identify the principle each example represents. (**Note:** An example may represent more than one principle.) Request that the participant also come up with examples of things that children say or do that illustrate child development principles. Repeat that child development principles are apparent as staff observe children and that keeping them safe and understanding them helps staff to relate in ways that nurture and support children's development.

3. Ask the participant to accurately and objectively observe children in a setting other than a classroom to collect real-life examples of each of the seven basic child development principles.

4. Ask the participant for examples of practices that she can use that reflect an understanding of each principle of development.

5. Review the examples the participant gathered and generate examples of staff behavior that reflect an understanding of each principle of child development. For example, a staff member is tolerant of a child who chews on a book because she knows that this behavior is a primary method of exploration at that age.

Activity 1–7: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?



Purpose: In this activity, participants identify the types of child development knowledge described in the Key Concepts that are critical to nurturing children and keeping them safe. The examples illustrate poor practices when such knowledge is lacking.

Outcome:

Participants apply basic child development principles in their work with children.

Materials:

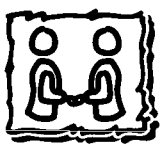
Chart paper, markers
Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?

1. *Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?* briefly describes situations that might arise when staff do not understand what young children are like. For each situation, ask participants to describe what the staff member needs to know about young children.

2. Then ask them to rewrite the situations so that the staff responses are based on knowledge of child development. (See *Trainer Preparation Notes* for Handout 5 for possible responses.)

3. Ask the participants to share their rewritten situations with the group. Develop a chart of all the suggestions and give it to the group to hang in a place where staff and parents can see it, such as the staff lounge or the office. This chart will be a daily reminder for all staff on how to implement child development principles.

Activity 1–8: Getting to Know You



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will identify effective ways to find out more about individual children.

Outcome:

Participants identify children's basic developmental needs.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers

To be successful with children, it is very important to understand them as individuals. No matter how adults are working with children—transporting them, reading to them, cooking for them, or talking with them and their parents at home—staff can be much more useful if they know a lot about each child. Materials on child development are a wonderful source of information about children in general; but to know about an individual child, staff members need to use other resources.

1. Ask the participant to generate a list of information that she may frequently need or want to know about a child. The list may look something like this:

   Is the child healthy?
   Does the child receive adequate nutrition?
   What does the child understand?
   How well does the child speak?
   Does the child speak more than one language?
   What kind of physical tasks can the child do?
   What fears does the child have?
   What makes the child feel good about herself?
   What does the child feel comfortable with?

2. Next, consider five commonly used sources of information about a child's development: parents, personal observation, teachers/other staff, developmental charts, and test results. Mention briefly how information is obtained from each source. You could also draw a large chart on chart paper. List the five sources across the top, and create a vertical column on the left-hand side that lists child development information. Ask participants to consider each piece of information and discuss it. As participants determine which source would be best for each item, indicate this on the chart.

3. After completing the chart, discuss which categories are the best sources of information. Parents and observations will probably lead, with teachers and other staff close behind. Discuss why *standardized* information (developmental charts, tests, and assessments) is less useful when thinking about a particular child.

Coach Preparation Notes:

See Bredekamp and Rosegrant, eds., *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children,* Vol. 1, Chapter 4, listed in the *Resources* section for a discussion of standardized and appropriate assessment.

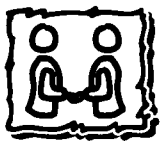
You may want to make the following points:

- Standardized tests fail to give a valid and reliable basis for describing individual children and their progress.
- Standardized tests fail to measure progress toward what programs actually teach.

- Standardized tests are based on the assumption of linear change, which is not consistent with the way young children actually develop.

4. As a follow-up activity, participants choose a child to observe, to understand, and for whom they will develop special activities.

Activity 1–9: Tour Guide



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will talk about children and the program and develop skills for explaining his or her philosophy and program practice. This activity will also create ownership and pride in the program.

Outcome:

Participants talk to parents and other staff about individual children and sound child development principles.

Materials:

Paper, pens

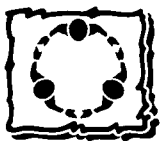
1. Have the participant take you on a tour of the program where he works. As you tour the facility, ask the participant to talk about the following:

   - The reasons he works here
   - What interests him about what the children are doing
   - Examples of practices that build trust, promote independence, and encourage positive self-concept
   - Examples of how the children learn through interaction
   - An amusing incident that made staff smile in appreciation of a child
   - Examples of practices that ensure children's safety

2. Take notes and offer feedback to the participant about these descriptions.

3. Discuss opportunities the participant could create in his work environment to talk about the program and practices. For example, he might talk with the next five families who are considering enrollment in the program.

Activity 1–10: Peeling Labels



Purpose: In this activity, participants will practice describing the behavior of children without using labels. Labels do not give accurate or useful information about children and are frequently harmful.

Outcome:

Participants apply basic child development principles in their work with children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Handout 6: Peeling Labels

1. Using the paired statements on *Handout 6: Peeling Labels,* ask participants to place a **check mark** in front of those that describe behavior and are not labels. Then ask, *As a parent, which remarks would you want to hear? Which would help you to better understand your child?*

2. Finally, generate more paired statements that contrast **labeling** with **describing.**

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants working independently or with other staff can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing activities such as the following ones. Some of the activities can contribute to the participants' professional portfolios.

Interviewing Staff Members

Have the participant interview several staff members in the program who have different jobs (cook, home visitor, janitor, family services worker, teacher, etc.). Have her ask what specific opportunities these staff have in their work to nurture children. Have the participant make a chart or write a description of the ways that an individual child might be nurtured by a variety of people.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Interview notes and charts

Observing for Developmental Goals

Ask the participant to accurately and objectively observe one child in the program for at least two hours over a period of time. Ask her to make a list of all the opportunities that the child has to develop trust, independence, or positive self-concept. Have the participant share and discuss the list with someone else in the program.

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of opportunities

Documenting Supportive Environments

Send the participant on a scavenger hunt in the community to find and document evidence of places where children are being kept safe and are:

- Developing trust
- Using all their senses
- Constructing their own knowledge
- Interacting with other children
- Interacting with adults
- Exploring the environment
- Talking about what they see

Suggest places such as a park, playground, grocery store, church, sports center, children's class, museum, or doctor's or dentist's office. Have the participant take pictures and/or describe what he sees, sharing his findings with another staff member from a different area and discussing how these environments support child development. Ask him to notice the many ways that development is supported or discouraged outside the classroom.

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of places where children are developing skills

Handout 2: Opportunity Knocks

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Infants			
Engage infants in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions. Talk in a pleasant, soothing voice. Make frequent eye contact.	____	____	____
Listen and respond to sounds that infants make, imitate them, and respect these sounds as the beginning of communication.	____	____	____
Keep infants safe while modeling the kinds of behavior that children are expected to learn.	____	____	____
Toddlers			
Keep toddlers safe and support them as they learn new skills. Watch to see what the child is trying to do and then provide necessary support for the child to do the task.	____	____	____
Respect the child's preference in the home and the center for familiar objects, food, and people as a healthy indication of a developing self-concept.	____	____	____
Give positively worded directions and not just constant *Nos*.	____	____	____
Model for toddlers by explaining or saying words they should use instead of hurting or biting other children.	____	____	____
Schedule time so that the day runs smoothly in the home and the center and is dictated more by children's needs than by the needs of adults.	____	____	____

Note: Use with Activity 1–3

Handout 2: Opportunity Knocks (Continued)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Preschoolers			
Support children's play and allow for developing independence. Keep children safe and help when needed, but allow for *I can do it myself!*	____	____	____
Remain patient with toilet accidents, spills, and unfinished jobs.	____	____	____
Encourage children to play together and to share. Allow for playing alone and do not expect the child to share favorite items.	____	____	____
Provide large amounts of uninterrupted time for a child to stay with a self-chosen task.	____	____	____
Encourage language development by listening to children and patiently answering their many *why* questions.	____	____	____
Provide safe, danger-free environments in the home and the center, recognizing that children overestimate their abilities and try things that are unsafe. Protect their safety without undermining their confidence.	____	____	____
Provide experiences that stimulate learning in all developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive.	____	____	____
Give children opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping and talking to solve problems.	____	____	____

Handout 1: Opportunities for Nurturing Children

	Practice	Observe	Describe
Infants			
Engage infants in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions. Talk in a pleasant, soothing voice. Make frequent eye contact.	____	____	____
Listen and respond to sounds that infants make, imitate them, and respect these sounds as the beginning of communication.	____	____	____
Keep infants safe while modeling the kinds of behavior that children are expected to learn.	____	____	____
Toddlers			
Keep toddlers safe and support them as they learn new skills. Watch to see what the child is trying to do and then provide necessary support for the child to do the task.	____	____	____
Respect the child's preference in the home and the center for familiar objects, food, and people as a healthy indication of a developing self-concept.	____	____	____
Give positively worded directions and not just constant *Nos*.	____	____	____
Model for toddlers by explaining or saying words they should use instead of hurting or biting other children.	____	____	____
Schedule time so that the day runs smoothly in the home and the center and is dictated more by children's needs than by the needs of adults.	____	____	____

Note: Use with Activity 1–2

Handout 1: Opportunities for Nurturing Children (Continued)

	Practice	Observe	Describe
Preschoolers			
Support children's play and allow for developing independence. Keep children safe and help when needed, but allow for *I can do it myself!*	____	____	____
Remain patient with toilet accidents, spills, and unfinished jobs.	____	____	____
Encourage children to play together and to share. Allow for playing alone and do not expect the child to share favorite items.	____	____	____
Provide large amounts of uninterrupted time for a child to stay with a self-chosen task.	____	____	____
Encourage language development by listening to children and patiently answering their many *why* questions.	____	____	____
Provide safe, danger-free environments in the home and the center, recognizing that children overestimate their abilities and try things that are unsafe. Protect their safety without undermining their confidence.	____	____	____
Provide experiences that stimulate learning in all developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive.	____	____	____
Give children opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping and talking to solve problems.	____	____	____

Handout 3: Vignettes

Vignette 1—Trust

It is a fabulous sunny morning. Three children are waiting at the corner of Erikson and Spock streets. Two hop on the bus, but the third, Kenya, ambles in the opposite direction, toward an interesting tuft of grass. Trying to hurry her up, the driver says, *Come on, Kenya. Hurry up, or we'll leave you.*

Vignette 2—Trust

Marta, a family service worker, had promised Geoffrey that he could play on a fantasy wood sculpture in Elkind Park as soon as they were done at the dentist's office. The appointments ran late, Geoffrey's checkup was interrupted by an emergency in the next room, and now it's 4 o'clock. Marta wants to hurry back to the center, but Geoffrey remembers her promise. *Listen, we'll go to the park. We can't stay as long as you'd like, but at least we can have a good short time.*

Vignette 3—Independence

Lily is visibly struggling to pull on her boots. She is red-faced from the exertion and totally absorbed in her task. The cook approaches. *Oh, Lily, I'm sorry those boots are so tricky. Let me help you pull them over your shoes.*

Vignette 4—Independence

Yolanda has assembled a receptive audience—two bears, one stuffed duck, and two four-year-olds—to hear her story. She is reading, in very animated fashion, the story *Chickens in a Rice Pot.* Her teacher notices that Yolanda's book is upside down. She ignores this fact completely as she moves on to some block builders in another corner of the room.

Vignette 5—Independence

Ayudame! Carlos has placed a herd of plastic animals near the window. He's obviously trying to build a bridge or ramp to take them up to the ledge. He attempts to march them one-by-one, but the ramp never holds. He used a narrow strip of tape and a scarf from housekeeping. He pleads, *Help me!* An assistant moves in close and says, *You've got a good idea. I'll find a long board for you to make it stronger.*

Note: Use with Activity 1–4

Handout 3: Vignettes (Continued)

Vignette 6—Independence and Self-Concept

Daniel reaches across his wheelchair into the crayon bin and comes up with a handful. He swipes this fistful of crayons across the paper. The results do not seem to disappoint him. The volunteer, however, notices and takes the paper away. *Daniel, you've got to learn to take just one.* She sits at his side and they engage in a not-so-satisfying-to-Daniel task of taking one out. At the end of this ***lesson*** he continues to reach for fistfuls.

Vignette 7—Self-Concept

A special visitor has been coming to the center for six weeks, teaching the children some folk dances. Today, the children are scheduled to perform before a small group of parents. At the last minute, two young boys tell you, *We don't want to move our arms and wear hats, we just want to do leg dancing.*

Vignette 8—Self-Concept

Enjolie climbs onto the bus and sits right behind you. During a lengthy stop, she tells you that she saw a movie about a lion. She tells you she went with her mom and her brother. The lion roared. She adds, *We saw it on the big scream.*

Handout 3: Vignettes—*Trainer Preparation Notes*

Vignette 1
Trust

Which is more important—for Kenya to learn to hurry up when the bus is waiting or for her to learn to trust a caring adult who will keep her safe and would never ***leave her?*** The threat *I'll leave you* or *You'll get left* is fairly commonly heard. This threat strikes a child at her/his most vulnerable place—the fear of abandonment. Consider the child who shrieks in terror at becoming ***lost*** at the grocery store. Which is better to have in his memory—the threat of *You'll be left,* or the firm promise of *I'll never leave you?* What else could the driver say?

Vignette 2
Trust

Which is more important—for Marta to make up for lost time and hustle back to the center, or for her to establish trust in Geoffrey by keeping her promise? Should Marta rethink whether she should make promises in situations in which she has little control over how time is spent?

Vignette 3
Independence

Did Lily ask for help? Could the cook possibly have let her continue her struggle? What might Lily have gained by continuing to struggle on her own?

Vignette 4
Independence

Which is more important—for Yolanda to learn to hold the book in the ***correct*** way, or for her to enjoy the rapt audience for her independent story? Did the teacher miss a ***teachable moment*** or did she protect Yolanda's independence and sense of self?

Vignette 5
Independence

There is a time to watch and a time to help. We do not want to move in and assist or correct when a child is working independently, but a request for help should be answered. Sometimes we promote independence by helping and not by asking coyly, *Can you figure out a way?* If you had a flat tire and asked a passerby for help, would you want to hear, *How do you think you could solve that?* It is important not to ignore a simple request for help under the guise of promoting independence. Politeness also matters.

Vignette 6
Independence and Self-Concept

Sometimes, breaking a task down into its smaller parts is helpful. Sometimes it is not. Picking up crayons to color is interesting to Daniel. Picking them up to put them back in is not. He wants to color on paper, not to put in and take out crayons. He will gradually discover that one works better than a fistful. Until then . . . .

Vignette 7
Self-Concept

An adult might be tempted to insist that the children do the dance the way it was taught, out of respect for the teacher or so as not to disappoint the parents. A better response might be to say, *I'm interested in seeing your leg dancing, and I'm sure everyone will enjoy your own way of performing.*

Vignette 8
Self-Concept

It is often a good idea to let ***mistakes*** (even humorous or charming ones such as this) simply stand. An alternative might be to quietly and carefully repeat, *Oh, you saw it on the big screen,* giving correct feedback, but in no way calling attention to her error. Under no circumstances should adults laugh out loud or pointedly correct a child, as in *Enjolie, that's a screen, not scream.*

Note: Use with Activity 1–4

Handout 4: Child Development in Action

A baby smiles and gurgles in delight as an adult talks and sings to her.

A child says, *When this glass grows up, it gets bigger.*

A toddler stands up and eventually walks without crawling first.

A child says, *You promised we could go outside today. Can we?*

A child spends the whole time outdoors digging with sticks.

A child says, *We must be having soup today because it's raining.*

A toddler chews on a book.

A child carries pegs into the housekeeping area to use for food.

A child cries at seeing a real clown.

A child breaks her cookies into pieces to have *more.*

A child is happy that someone in his class can understand and encourage his home language.

A child says, *No, don't help—I do it.*

A child says, *Will you be the baby today?*

A child says, *Watch me, watch me, watch me.*

Note: Use with Activity 1–6

Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?

(1) In a loud voice, a staff member speaks only English to a child who understands and speaks very little English.

(2) A staff member refuses to order new books for the toddler rooms, saying that they got new ones last year and should have taken better care of them.

(3) Staff members leave infants alone for long periods of time or let them cry themselves to sleep.

(4) Head Start staff dress up for Halloween in masks and scary costumes. Several three-year-olds are frightened. The staff try to tease the children out of being frightened.

(5) A four-year-old asks a staff member, *How come your skin is a different color?* The staff member is embarrassed and doesn't know what to say, so she walks away.

(6) A staff member asks a four-and-a-half-year-old, *What are you doing?* When the child's answer goes on for too long, the staff member tunes out and eventually walks away.

(7) A staff member helps a three-and-a-half-year-old who has fallen get up. He says, *If you'd tie your shoelaces, you wouldn't trip over yourself.*

(8) A staff member pulls an infant's thumb out of her mouth and says, *That's dirty.*

Note: Use with Activity 1–7

Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?—*Trainer Preparation Notes*

Explanations

(1) In a loud voice, a staff member speaks only English to a child who understands and speaks very little English.

The staff member could: learn a few key words in the child's home language and use these to demonstrate respect for the child and his family life.

The staff member needs to know: that it takes time for children to learn a language that differs from the one spoken at home. Using a loud voice will not help the child understand unfamiliar words. Also, children feel a greater sense of security when they are in an environment that recognizes and respects their home language.

(2) A staff member refuses to order new books for the toddler rooms, saying that they got new ones last year and should have taken better care of them.

The staff member could: make sure books are replaced throughout the year when they are worn through use or active exploration.

The staff member needs to know: that infants and toddlers learn about books by using all their senses to explore them. Infants may mouth books, and toddlers may tear a few pages before they have fully developed the skills to turn pages.

(3) Staff members leave infants alone for long periods of time or let them cry themselves to sleep.

The staff member could: offer gentle, supportive responses to children of all ages, talking to, singing to, and generally interacting with them.

The staff member needs to know: that infants are developing trust and need a quick response and lots of adult interaction.

(4) Head Start staff dress up for Halloween in masks and scary costumes. Several three-year-olds are frightened. The staff try to tease the children out of being frightened.

The staff member could: dress up in front of the children with friendly or silly costumes, or as a character from familiar books, with simple makeup rather than a mask that hides the familiar face.

The staff member needs to know: that children this age cannot always distinguish real from pretend. They are scared because they think the costumes are real. Teasing only aggravates the problem.

Note: Use with Activity 1–7

Handout 5: Where Would We Be without Child Development Knowledge?—*Trainer Preparation Notes (Continued)*

(5) A four-year-old asks a staff member, *How come your skin is a different color?* The staff member is embarrassed and doesn't know what to say, so she walks away.

The staff member could: provide a simple explanation of how people from different racial groups have different colors of skin. Also, the staff member can use this as a **teachable moment** to introduce antibias concepts.

The staff member needs to know: that young children become increasingly aware of likenesses and differences—including skin color. The child is curious about why people have different skin colors.

(6) A staff member asks a four-and-a-half-year-old, *What are you doing?* When the child's answer goes on for too long, the staff member tunes out and eventually walks away.

The staff member could: begin conversations with children only when she has enough time to listen and engage in conversations.

The staff member needs to know: that this child has a large vocabulary and likes to use it in long and detailed conversations.

(7) A staff member helps a three-and-a-half-year-old who has fallen get up. He says, *If you'd tie your shoelaces, you wouldn't trip over yourself.*

The staff member could: offer to help the child tie her shoelaces.

The staff member needs to know: that most children do not learn to tie their shoelaces until they are older. Scolding a child in this way is not appropriate.

(8) A staff member pulls an infant's thumb out of her mouth and says, *That's dirty.*

The staff member could: talk to and hold the infant to help the child feel secure at Head Start. In addition, to make sure the child's thumb is as clean as possible, the staff member can wash the child's hands frequently throughout the day and always after diapering and before and after feeding time.

The staff member needs to know: that infants use their senses to learn about the world. They put everything in their mouths, including their thumbs. Also, infants find it comforting to suck their thumbs or pacifiers.

Handout 6: Peeling Labels

(1)	He's shy.	(1)	He spends some time watching others before he joins in to play.
(2)	She's a little helper.	(2)	She puts things away.
(3)	He is so musical.	(3)	He knows all our songs.
(4)	He's a Picasso.	(4)	He paints a lot.
(5)	She's a loner.	(5)	She plays by herself.
(6)	He's hyperactive.	(6)	He moves around.
(7)	She's a motor mouth.	(7)	She talks a lot.
(8)	He plays by himself.	(8)	He's solitary.
(9)	She's a regular Whitney Houston.	(9)	She likes to sing.
(10)	He's a neat freak.	(10)	He puts things away.
(11)	He is fearful.	(11)	He did not go into the water today.
(12)	She's a picky eater.	(12)	She chooses her food carefully.

Note: Use with Activity 1–10

Interacting with Children

In this module, the participants focus on communication with children. They will gain an understanding of how talking and listening to children can provide insight to an individual child's interests and needs while helping the child gain a positive self-concept in a supportive environment.

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, staff will be able to:

- Listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests
- Talk to children in ways that support their positive self-concept and address their individual needs

Key Concepts

- Language facilitates development.
- Children model adult behaviors.
- Children are always learning.

Background Information

Children do not enter programs as blank pages. All children have abundant background knowledge; experience; and personal, familial, and cultural characteristics. It is fundamental that adults understand each child's individual needs, perceptions, and interests if they are going to work successfully with children. Children's development is influenced by many factors, including the experiences they have. Development is much more than a simple *unfolding* along a predictable sequence. It is a dynamic process in which adults play a critical role. Being in the right place; being tuned in to a child; listening; asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions; or helping to expand their play are all ways that adults can nurture children. The nature and extent of adult interactions with children are vital factors in supporting and extending development.

Children and Language

To say that language facilitates development actually understates the connection. Children use language to solve problems and to master their own behavior. For example, many toddlers exclaim, *No!* when they approach an electrical outlet. Sometimes speech is so important that children cannot accomplish a learning task if they are not allowed to use it.

Praise vs. Encouragement

Because children take words very literally, it is important for you to be positive and encouraging in the messages you send. Although it is true that a positive self-concept is an important ingredient for learning, the

practice of lavishing praise on children for all accomplishments is not likely to be successful. Praise judges a child's work, rather than describing it and allowing the child to make a judgement. Praise is usually broad and vague, rather than specific. Praise puts the emphasis on the adults' response to something rather than the child's perception of his or her work. In fact, very little evidence shows that such adult comments give children greater confidence; however, quite a bit of evidence indicates that they can have exactly the reverse effect. Praise may create anxiety, reduce risk-taking, invite dependency, and reduce adult credibility.

Of course it is important for adults to respond positively to children, and staff do this through encouragement. Encouragement is a positive acknowledgement that is specific and focuses on the child's process of doing something rather than the adult's judgement. Encouragement never compares one child to another.

Here are some examples of both praise and encouragement:

- What a great drawing! (praise)
- Tell me about your painting. (encouragement)
- What a good job cleaning up. (praise)
- Show me how you did that. (encouragement)

Role of Adults in the Learning Process

Adults play a very important role in extending children's learning by recognizing when a child is absorbed in a learning task and appreciating a child's efforts to organize knowledge. **Adults can nurture** children with their presence, language, and materials. Independence and self-motivation are essential to lifelong learning. Children need to value such built-in rewards as becoming more interested and competent as opposed to less essential rewards such as letter grades or adult praise.

All adults working with children are privileged to observe, appreciate, and assist in their development. Interactions with children are most helpful when they are positive, playful, understanding, and cued by the children. Therefore, it is important for adults to provide a supportive environment for children that encourages them in specific ways without judging or placing a value on what they are doing. Such encouragement is delivered in a sincere, direct way in a natural voice.

Because **adults are models** for children's behavior, it is very important that adults be good participants: be flexible and curious and have a sense of adventure and a love of learning. If adults are bored, so are children. If adults are energetic, positive, and hopeful, so are children. Children watch what the driver does when the bus breaks down, what the cook does when the electricity goes out, what the director does when a conflict arises—and

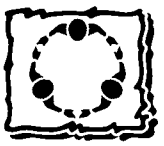
they learn. Hopefully, they see adults who are flexible in unforeseen circumstances, who problem-solve rather than blame, and who are cheerful and realistic. Many intellectual gains are made in everyday living: replacing a light bulb is as valuable a cognitive task as matching dominoes.

Learning: An Ongoing Process

Children are learning all the time. This is why children's programs cannot be accurately described as having *learning activities in the morning and recreation in the afternoon.* Children are learning whenever they are interacting—with each other, with adults, and with objects in their environment.

Learning is never confined to a table, a time of day, or a stage. Learning is everywhere and lifelong. Day-to-day, real-life experiences are necessary hooks on which to hang future learning. The word *farm* is meaningless to the child who has not seen one. *Night* can be described only if a child can recall the sight, sound, and feel of night. Experiences are absolutely essential to successful learning.

Activity 2–1: What Do You Think?



Purpose: In this activity, participants will clarify and share their existing beliefs about how adults should interact with children. These beliefs determine one's current approaches with children.

Outcome:

Participants interact with children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Handout 7: What Do You Think?

1. *Distribute Handout 7: What Do You Think?* to the group. Ask participants to review the statements silently, then circle the number of each statement with which they agree. Tell them to draw a line through the number of the statements with which they disagree. When they complete this initial review, ask participants to identify the seven statements on their papers that they agree with most strongly.

2. Ask participants to work with the person beside them to see if they can agree on five statements. Allow time for negotiation.

3. Ask participants to discuss their statements in small groups (for example, those sitting at their table—groups of six to ten) to see whether, as a group, they can agree on three statements that they all believe and feel strongly about. This step requires about ten to fifteen minutes for considerable group discussion.

4. With the attention of the entire group, ask one of the tables (or small groups) for one statement with which they agree. Write it on the chart paper. Ask how many other tables also agree with the statement. Ask for a statement from the next table and add it to the chart paper. Again, poll to see how many other tables agreed with that particular statement. Continue around the room in this manner until all tables are heard from and all statements have been posted.

5. You now have a series of statements about which there is some group consensus. Continue the discussion by asking questions such as the following:

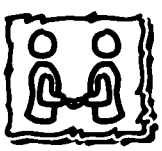
   How did you arrive at your shared beliefs? Was there much disagreement within your group?

   Did your discussion cause you to rethink any of your existing beliefs about interactions with children? Can you offer some examples?

   Which shared belief is most apparent in our program? Least apparent?

> **Trainer Preparation Notes:**
>
> The value of this exercise is not only in the personal clarification of philosophy for each individual, but in the discussion during which participants explain, debate, and attempt to persuade. The nuances and subtle emphases in many of these statements challenge simple acceptance or rejection. During the table discussions, most negative statements are debated and dismissed. Another opportunity to challenge negative statements is during the whole group discussion. This generated record of beliefs that the group shares is extremely valuable and can be referred to throughout the remainder of training since many recur in subsequent modules.

Activity 2–2: Listening Talk



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will further identify and use responses with children that encourage communication. Effective interactions begin when adults really *listen* to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests. Different types of listening responses can encourage a child or cut off further communication.

Outcome:

Participants listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Statements printed on 3 x 5 index cards

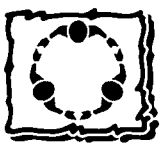
1. Put the following statements on 3 x 5 index cards:

Tell me about it.	*Let's talk.*
Tell me some more.	*Sounds like this is important.*
Go ahead, I'm listening.	*I want to hear you.*
That's interesting.	*Don't be a crybaby.*
Keep it down.	*Not right now.*
Clean up that mess.	*Not so loud.*
Oh, that must hurt.	*Go find something to play with.*
Don't interrupt.	*You are acting spoiled.*
I'd like to hear about it.	*I'm busy right now.*
You just want attention.	*It's not good manners to interrupt.*
Can this wait?	*Not so fast.*
Just be quiet for a change.	*Come sit by me so I can hear.*
Shame on you.	*I want to understand.*
You've had your turn.	

2. Have the participant sort the statements into two categories: positive (*I am listening*) and negative (*Go away*). Ask her to expand the list with other examples. During the sorting activity, discuss how these responses sound and how a child might feel when they are used.

3. Schedule a time to observe the participant interacting with children. Provide feedback on the participant's progress in responding to children with statements that encourage further communication.

Activity 2–3: More Listening Talk



Purpose: In this activity, participants will develop listening responses that will help children learn to express themselves and solve problems.

Outcome:

Participants listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Circumstances printed on 3 x 5 index cards

1. Give each person a card that describes a circumstance in which a child needs to express feelings. Each person should come up with a negative and a positive response.

Sample cards:

A four-year-old working on a puzzle: *I can't do anything right.*

Negative response: *You can if you want to.*
Positive response: *You're discouraged with that puzzle.*

A five-year-old says, *I don't want any old lunch.*

Negative response: *It's good for you. You can eat it.*
Positive response: *You don't feel like having lunch.*

A three-year-old at the zoo: *I don't want to see the lion. I'm afraid.*

Negative response: *Go ahead. The lion can't hurt you.*
Positive response: *You're worried about the lion.*

2. Discuss that in each case, the good listening response encourages the child to talk further and to express feelings. The eventual solution, if there is one, is different for each child. The child who is frustrated with the puzzle may go on to try something else. The child who does not want any lunch may go on to say he or she is worried about something and discussing it can make him or her feel well enough to eat after all. The child who does not want to look at the lion may decide he or she just wants to take a peek—*if nobody teases me.*

   Always stress that children should know their feelings are accepted and adults will listen and help them work toward a solution.

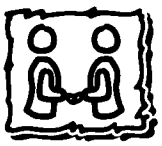
3. Discuss with participants how these practices relate to their real work with children. Also remind participants that it may not be possible for an adult to listen carefully every single time a child comes with something to say. Rather than pretending to listen, the adults should say, *I can't listen right now. I will later.* Ask participants to enlist a colleague to observe and provide them with feedback about their effective use of *listening talk.*

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Discussion Points for Activity 2–4 and Activity 2–5

Research shows that very often adults do not wait a sufficient period of time for children to develop an adequate response to a question. The amount of time a child needs to formulate a response will vary. Therefore, it is important to allow every child a chance to consider a question and not to reward those who are the fastest. For example, open-ended questions, addressed later in this module, require more response time than other questions. Adults may need to become aware of the tendency to expect a quick answer from children and to rush in with the answer or another question.

Activity 2–4: Hey, Wait a Minute!



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will learn to appreciate the importance of allowing children sufficient time to respond to questions.

Outcome:

Participants listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Stopwatch

1. Have the participant spend a morning observing adults interacting with children. The participant should use a stopwatch to calculate the amount of time that elapses between the time an adult poses a question to a child and the time the adult intervenes to clarify the question or offer a response. Instruct the participant to observe many such occasions and record each *wait time.* Have her observe adults with individual children in small groups and a large group.

   Note: Obviously, you should not tell the adults your purpose ahead of time. Offer to tell them about it at the end of your observation period. The participant may be surprised to find that the average length of time that adults wait to let a child respond is less than two seconds!

2. Discuss the information presented above and ask participants to consider the following questions:

   On average, how long did the adults you observed wait for children to answer? Were you surprised?

What does it feel like to have a conversation with someone who doesn't give you time to speak and who does all the talking?

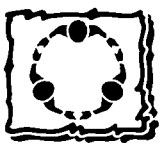
What kinds of responses are children likely to come up with if they must answer quickly?

Do you think there's any way that we tend to equate fastest *with* smartest*?*

Why do you think it might be so difficult to engage in wait time*—to give a child time to respond? Is it a* fear of silence*? Are there other reasons?* (Point out the temperamental characteristics of adults, such as impulsiveness or high-activity level, that may come into play.)

3. Conclude the exercise by pointing out that giving children adequate time to respond combines important listening skills with the necessary restraint that is part of speaking skills. Both skills are developed in subsequent activities.

Activity 2–5: A Time to Wait



Purpose: In this activity, participants will develop listening skills that include giving children time to reflect before responding.

Outcome:

Participants listen to children in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions, and interests.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers

1. Discuss the information on common observing practices presented in the *Trainer Preparation Notes:* Discussion Points for Activity 2–4 and Activity 2–5.

2. Ask participants to consider the following questions:

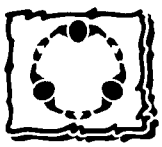
   - *What does it feel like to have a conversation with someone who doesn't give you time to speak and who does all the talking?*
   - *What kinds of responses are children likely to come up with if they must answer quickly?*
   - *Do you think there's any way that we tend to equate* fastest *with* smartest?

- *Why do you think it might be so difficult to engage in* wait time*—to give a child time to respond? Is it a* fear of silence*? Are there other reasons?* (Point out the temperamental characteristics of adults, such as impulsiveness or high-activity level, that may come into play.)

- *Think about your own experiences listening to children. Anyone care to share your reflection?*

3. Conclude the exercise by pointing out that giving children adequate time to respond combines important listening skills with the necessary restraint that is part of speaking skills. Both skills are developed in subsequent activities.

Activity 2–6: Nobody Likes Me



Purpose: In this activity, participants will develop skills in talking with children using nonjudgmental responses that feed back what they have expressed and encourage them to talk more.

Outcome:

Participants talk to children in ways that support their positive self-concept and address their individual needs.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
3 x 5 index cards

1. Ask the group to consider a familiar situation in which a four-year-old child comes up to you and says, *Nobody likes me. They won't play with me.* What is something that an adult is likely to say to that child? Ask participants to write their responses on 3 x 5 index cards and pass them to the front of the room.

2. Discuss the following:

   According to Thomas Gordon, author of *P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training and T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training,*[1] typical responses to a child expressing a feeling fall into several categories. Some of those categories are:

   - **Denying the problem.** *Everybody likes you.* Does this help? What if you, as an adult, said, *I feel lousy today,* and someone

[1] Thomas Gordon. *P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training* (New York: New American Library, 1975) and Thomas Gordon. *T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training* (New York: Wyden, 1974).

else said, *Gee, you look great.* Would it help? Would it stop you from feeling lousy? No. You wanted to talk about feeling lousy. The other person is denying your problem.

- **Blaming the child.** *Well, it's your own fault nobody likes you. You never share.* Making a judgement that blames the child only makes him or her defensive. The child is not going to confide in you anymore.

- **Solving the child's problem.** *Take the snack outside with you, and they'll come around.* This does not encourage the child to go ahead and talk about his or her feelings. Worse, it implies that only you can solve his or her problems and that he or she is helpless.

- **Interpreting.** *You must be worried about something going on at home.* Being diagnosed makes one feel uncomfortable. Very often the diagnosis is wrong and the child feels misunderstood, which adds to his or her original problem.

- **Questioning.** *Who said they didn't like you? Tell me their names. Where did this happen?* To be grilled about the details causes further embarrassment. The details do not matter. A child seldom knows the facts about what happened. What does matter is the child's feelings and helping him or her talk about them.

- **Threatening.** *If you don't stop whining, you'll just have to play by yourself.* Obviously, this response shuts the door. The child knows you do not care what he or she is feeling.

3. Read each of the index card responses aloud. Ask the group to consider whether a response fits into one of the listed response categories.

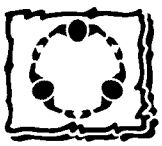
4. Now that participants have identified some of the wrong things to say to a child, they can talk about what is right. Ask the group to think about how an adult can use active listening to keep the communication open and to continue listening to a child. Point out all the non-judgmental, listening responses. Remember that the idea is to *feed back the feeling.* Some effective active listening responses are:

   You seem upset.
   You think nobody likes you.
   Tell me about it.
   Go on, I'm listening.

Ask the group to develop some additional nonjudgmental responses. Point out that the skill of talking to children is related to the skill of listening. Indeed, some of the best talking is active listening, as it reflects back what was heard in order to encourage more. Such an approach nurtures children's language development as well as the ability to express emotions and solve problems.

5. Ask participants to determine how effective they are in using active listening responses after they return to their program. Tell them to use a tape recorder as they interact with children in a routine setting for a period of sixty to ninety minutes. Have participants play the tape back and record the number of times that they gave active listening responses to a child who expressed a feeling.

Activity 2–7: Turning the Words Around



Purpose: In this activity, participants will practice addressing children with simple and positive statements.

Outcome:

Participants talk to children in ways that support their positive self-concept and address their individual needs.

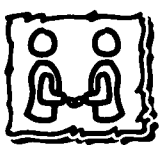
Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Handout 8: Turning the Words Around

1. Ask participants to rewrite each statement on *Handout 8: Turning the Words Around* so that they are simple and positive. (Possible responses are given in the Answer Key.) When participants finish rewording the statements, invite them to share some with the group. Point out that there are many ways to express expectations positively. Discuss the fact that just as negative statements can become habitual, so can simple, positive ones. The more this skill is practiced, the easier it becomes.

2. Have the participants plan and present this activity at the next parent-education opportunity. Remind the participants to model this practice for parents on an ongoing basis.

Activity 2–8: Praise vs. Encouragement



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will distinguish between praise and encouragement and use language that encourages children.

Outcome:

Participants talk to children in ways that support their positive self-concept and address their individual needs.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Handout 9: Praise vs. Encouragement

Praise is generally ineffective as a means of improving children's self-image and is often used to manipulate. It judges children's work and can be broad and vague, focusing on the adult's response to something. Encouragement is a positive acknowledgment that is specific and looks at the child's process of doing something. Encouragement does not compare one child to another.

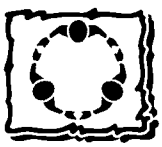
1. Have the participant review the statements on *Handout 9: Praise vs. Encouragement* and determine the phrases that encourage and those that represent superficial praise.

2. For statements representing superficial praise, ask the participant to reword them so they are more substantial and encouraging to children.

3. Discuss ways to shift the focus from having the adult make judgments about children's efforts to helping children evaluate their own work. For example, you could ask questions such as, *How did you finally get all those things to stick together?* or *Which picture would you like to hang in our room and which would you like to take home?*

4. Ask the participant to keep the difference between praise and encouragement in mind for a week and to collect statements that she has made that reflect this new understanding.

Activity 2–9: Asking Children Questions



Purpose: In this activity, participants will identify and practice the best way to ask children questions.

Outcome:

Participants talk to children in ways that support their positive self-concept and address their individual needs.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers

In Head Start, higher levels of thinking such as understanding or reasoning are stressed over lower levels of thinking such as recognizing or memorizing. All staff should be able to ask questions that have more than one possible answer. Asking *What do you think about that?* will take a child further than *What color is this?* or *Where is your elbow?*

1. Have participants identify the questions from this list that have more than one possible answer.

   What day is today?
   What makes night?
   How many trucks are here?
   How many trucks can fit into your garage?
   Are there more trucks or more cars?
   What letter does sun *start with?*
   Why is it so warm out here?

2. Help them evaluate each suggested question to determine if it truly has multiple possible responses or simply one right answer. Organize the list of questions under two columns: one titled, *Many Possible Answers* and the other, *Only One Answer.* Ask the group to develop its own list of questions that can fit into these two categories.

3. Ask participants to observe for one day how other adults talk with children. At the end of the day, classify the questions into those with many possible answers and those with only one.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants working independently or with other staff can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing activities such as the following ones. Some of the activities can contribute to the participants' professional portfolios.

Defining Program with Positive Interactions

Using some concepts from the workshops or resources listed at the end of this guide, have the participants write a one-page personal statement about what a program that demonstrates positive interactions with children looks like. Ask them to use some examples of positive interactions that they observed in the program. Suggest that the participants also write a section about the statements to avoid using with children.

Possible Portfolio Entry: One-page personal statement

Using Positive Statements vs. Negative Ones

Over a one-week period, have the participant tape-record fifteen-minute segments of time in which he interacts with children. Play it back to notice how many of the participant's statements are positive and how many are negative. Ask him to note in his portfolio whether the proportion of positive statements increases over the week.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Personal analysis of positive statements

Goals for Interacting with Children

Instruct the participant to identify and record in her portfolio two personal goals to develop as she interacts with children and families and to share her goals with a colleague. The participant might also invite her colleague to observe her in action and offer feedback. Or have the participant check in with her partner a month later to report on how she is doing.

Possible Portfolio Entry: List of personal goals

Handout 7: What Do You Think?

(1) Using a loud, clear voice is the best way to get children's attention.

(2) It is best to ask children questions that have one clear and simple answer.

(3) It is more important for children to come up with imaginative, original responses to questions than to get the right answer.

(4) Labels are a useful way to describe children so that we all know what we are talking about.

(5) Using labels is the best way to get services for children with special needs.

(6) It is usually best to get down on a child's physical level when speaking to him or her.

(7) Children's most valuable learning occurs when they are reflecting quietly on something they have observed.

(8) Most adults do not wait long enough between the time they ask a child a question and the time they expect an answer.

(9) When a child expresses a negative feeling, it is best to quickly try to turn it around.

(10) Parents can understand their children better if the staff try to describe children's behavior instead of labeling them in familiar ways.

(11) Children will learn English quicker if all adults expect them to use it and speak only English to them.

(12) Children feel a greater sense of security when they are in an environment that recognizes and respects their home language.

Note: Use with Activity 2–1

Handout 7: What Do You Think? (Continued)

(13) Children have to learn that adults cannot always give them attention just because they think they need it.

(14) If a child is having trouble doing something, an adult should not wait long before moving in to help.

(15) Positive statements are usually more effective in directing children's behavior than negative ones.

(16) Adults are likely to speak to children as they were spoken to as children.

(17) Adults should speak to children in the same way they speak to other adults.

(18) Children usually speak up when adults speak to them inappropriately.

(19) A good way to get children to speak about their feelings is for adults to repeat what they said.

(20) If adults explain something to children, such as what is real and what is pretend, children will usually change their perspective.

Handout 8: Turning the Words Around

Instructions: Rewrite each statement into a positive and simple statement.

- *There's no hitting allowed on the bus.*

- *If you don't use the playground equipment properly, you won't be allowed to play outside.*

- *If you use language like that again, I'm going to have to tell your father. I'm sure he'll know how to stop you.*

- *Stop dripping paint all over the floor.*

- *Don't sit there. You're blocking others from seeing.*

- *You know better than to run in the hallways.*

- *Stay away from that burner or you'll be sorry.*

- *Don't play with that phone! I've got work to do.*

Note: Use with Activity 2–7

Handout 8: Turning the Words Around—*Answer Key*

- *There's no hitting allowed on the bus.*
  Keep your hands to yourself while you're on the bus.

- *If you don't use the playground equipment properly, you won't be allowed to play outside.*
  Please let the children swing by themselves. If you push them, they may fall off and you might get kicked.

- *If you use language like that again, I'm going to have to tell your father. I'm sure he'll know how to stop you.*
  Words like those are hurtful. Let me help you think of some better words to use.

- *Stop dripping paint all over the floor.*
  If you wipe your brush on the paint jar, the paint will drip into the jar instead of on the floor.

- *Don't sit there. You're blocking others from seeing.*
  Sit down on the rug, please, so that everyone can see.

- *You know better than to run in the hallways.*
  Walk in the hallway, please. If you run, you might fall.

- *Stay away from that burner or you'll be sorry.*
  Let's move over here so that hot stove won't hurt you.

- *Don't play with that phone! I've got work to do.*
  I've got to finish this now. Will you come back later so we can talk some more?

Handout 9: Praise vs. Encouragement

Instructions: Review the following statements and determine which are encouraging and which are superficial praise. Rewrite the ones that are superficial, making them more substantial and encouraging to the children.

- *What a wonderful painting!*
- *Show me how you did that.*
- *I like that bow in your hair.*
- *Tell me about this house you've built.*
- *What a good job cleaning up.*
- *That's great.*
- *I like the way Maria is listening.*
- *Good job, Tekkai!*
- *You are the best cleaner-upper in the class today.*
- *You organized the block area by putting all the same kinds of blocks together.*
- *You look excited about what you brought with you today.*

Note: Use with Activity 2–8

Handout 9: Praise vs. Encouragement—*Answer Key*

- *What a wonderful painting!* **(praise)**
- *Show me how you did that.* **(encouragement)**
- *I like that bow in your hair.* **(praise)**
- *Tell me about this house you've built.* **(encouragement)**
- *What a good job cleaning up.* **(praise)**
- *That's great.* **(praise)**
- *I like the way Maria is listening.* **(praise)**
- *Good job, Tekkai!* **(praise)**
- *You are the best cleaner-upper in the class today.* **(praise)**
- *You organized the block area by putting all the same kinds of blocks together.* **(encouragement)**
- *You look excited about what you brought with you today.* **(encouragement)**

Nurturing Children through Families

In this module, participants learn how applying principles about parents and families can help to support families in nurturing their children.

Outcome

As a result of completing this module, staff will be able to:

- Identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children

Key Concepts

- Parents are already involved and are the primary influence in the lives of children.
- Parents play a distinctly different role in the lives of children than do staff members.
- It is not possible to accurately generalize about parents.
- Parents have strengths.
- Parents have something to offer staff members.
- Today's families experience many demands.
- There are *many* ways for parents to be *involved.*

Background Information

The following **Seven Principles about Parents and Families** apply to many aspects of the Head Start program and should be used in the development of program materials, messages, and practices.

Parents are already involved and are the primary influence in the lives of children.

You have all heard that *the parent is the child's first teacher.* While this is certainly true, parents are much, much more. Families, not programs, are the center of children's lives; and your job is to take cues from families to create programs and environments that reflect the cultures, strengths, and desires of families. All children identify with their families. Therefore, the attitudes that you have toward families and the degree of respect that you give them speaks volumes.

Parents play a distinctly different role in the lives of children than do staff members.

The saying that *the parent is the child's first teacher* is understood by some to mean that parents should be more like teachers in the program. The saying may even be stretched to include the suggestion that parents continue school-type activities (some inappropriate in themselves) at home. You need to remember that children coming to your program have learned quite a bit with the support of their *first teachers.* The methods that these teachers use seem to work pretty well as evidenced by the language, social, and motor skills of the children. True, these teachers may lack complete objectivity when it comes to their children, and how very grateful you can all be for that! Parents bring a special *irrational* caring for their child and intense emotional response. Staff members bring another kind of caring that is warm and affectionate but with more emotional distance. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner says that children need both rational and irrational caring and that they expect more of the first kind from early childhood programs and the second kind at home.

It is not possible to accurately generalize about parents.

Parents, after all, are people—with all of the complexities, physical and cultural differences, individual characteristics, and personal histories of any population. Parents are not a group, and it is dangerous to assume very much about them. They are hard-working, laid-back, silly, straight-laced, outgoing, reserved, liberal, conservative, tired, energized, humorous, serious, innocent, wise, artistic, and mechanical. Each family expresses culture differently. As staff members, you need to take time to get to know family members as individuals so that you can support their goals for their children.

Parents have strengths.

So many negative statements and attitudes about parents abound today that it seems necessary to point this out. Do parents also have shortcomings? Sure—they are people, but as staff members, you must be very cautious about assuming a *deficit perspective,* a view that families need to be *fixed,* especially if this view is based on income level or ethnicity. You also need to be cautious about looking everywhere but at yourself when seeking to improve the lives of children. It is too easy to blame families as the cause of children's problems instead of focusing on doing the very best as a staff member in your program. Mainly, it is just not useful to evaluate and judge the people you are working with as partners. Your job is to get to know families, noting and building upon their strengths. A continuing challenge is to check your biases at the door.

Parents have something to offer staff members.

Too often, staff-parent exchanges are viewed simply as a means of informing parents about their child. In reality, while staff members bring information about child development and their experience with many children of a particular age, family members bring information about the individual child across time and in a variety of settings. In an open, trusting relationship, families can also share the important events and occurrences that make up a child's daily life. Finally, in a multicultural community, families offer staff members the opportunity to broaden their personal horizons and experience the richness of cultural diversity.

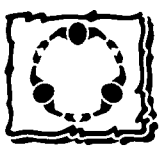
Today's families experience many demands.

It is important to recognize the ordinary, routine demands that many families with young children face as they go about the business of meeting their practical and emotional needs. Adequate employment, housing, health care, and transportation are often major issues for families. For recent arrivals to this country, language can make accessing even basic necessities a huge challenge. Employed parents simply add another job to the one they are already doing. They undertake hair-raising schedules in an effort to *do it all.* These schedules may not include time for leisure, for self, or for adequate sleep. Therefore, *it is a real mistake to interpret parents' lack of availability to a program as lack of concern for their child.*

There are *many* ways for parents to be involved.

It is time to broaden the concept of what parent involvement really means. It is time to stop evaluating success in terms of how many parents attend a program event or their willingness to carry out a home assignment, such as *read two books to your child* or *give your child a hug today.* Your challenge is to be flexible and creative enough to provide a wide range of options so that families can participate in their children's lives and choose the level and type of involvement that is best for them.

Activity 3–1: Where Do You Stand?



Purpose: In this activity, participants will think about how they view parents and families in the program and recognize that there are many ways that families and staff can work together.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
List of statements

1. Tell participants the following:

   Imagine that there is a line through this room running right along here, representing a continuum of agreement and disagreement with some statements that I'm going to read to you. (Indicate direction and length.) *I would like you to get up and walk to the spot on the line that most closely matches your response to the statement. If you* ***strongly agree,*** *come over here.* (Indicate one extreme.) *If you* ***strongly disagree,*** *come over to this side. (Indicate the other extreme. Show the position for* **no opinion**—*the middle of the line, as well as* **mild agreement, mild disagreement,** *and so forth).*

   Do not worry if there are others clustered around a spot; just make room for one another. Do not worry, either, if you are the only one on a given point—it is okay to hold your own opinion. Just think about your own response, and move to the appropriate spot in the room. We will not be discussing these statements right now, just using our feet to show where we stand. Let's begin with the first statement.

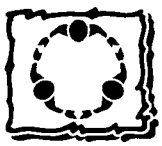
   - Most children today don't get proper discipline at home; that's why so many children have behavior problems in the program.
   - Low-income families have strange priorities. They spend money on expensive shoes, junk food, or video equipment when they don't have enough to put an adequate roof over their heads.
   - Families need your support, not your criticism.
   - Generally speaking, low-income parents and single parents have poor parenting skills.
   - To have a lasting impact on children, you need to work through parents.
   - There are probably a lot of children who would get more attention if they lived with me instead of their parents.
   - Most parents take staff members for granted and don't appreciate the work they do.
   - If parents really care about their children, then they will attend program functions.
   - Most parents are doing the best they can.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Some statements are deliberately strongly worded or negative. This was done to motivate the participants to think about what they believe. These statements are not necessarily intended to be positive or acceptable statements.

2. Ask the participants to return to their seats and continue the exercise. Lead a discussion around the fact that the purpose of this exercise is to stimulate views about parents and families of children in programs. State that while some statements may sound jarring, they do reflect statements made by some people in the early childhood field. Some assumptions that these statements reveal are referred to in other parts of this module and will serve as the basis for further discussion.

Activity 3–2: Parent Panel



Purpose: In this activity, participants will appreciate the individuality and diversity of families and learn about the cultural identities of children in their program.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Panelists

A wonderful way to learn about the cultural identities of children and families is to ask. Parents are often very willing and flattered to tell program staff about their lives, the choices they make, and how they plan to raise their children.

1. Ask four people representing different cultures to present a panel discussion before the group. Begin by asking parents or other family members to serve on the panel. Follow up with members of the staff, consultants, volunteers, or anyone connected with the program who is interested in sharing information in a personal, informal way.

   Some panelists may want to bring items from home, maps to refer to a home country, samples of food, or tapes of music. The best stories are the personal ones. In order to stimulate the thinking of the panelists, ask them these types of questions:

What are child-rearing practices like in your country of origin?
What types of food are customary in your culture?
What is the educational system like in your country of origin?

Suggest topics for the panelists to choose. All of this can add interest, but make sure that panelists are told that you are interested in informal, personal information.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Some panelists may try to cover a great deal of information on the geography, history, and politics of their country, and the information gathering can become overwhelming. Therefore, remind panelists that the presentation should take five to ten minutes.

2. At the workshop, instruct the audience that they will first hear from the panelists and then there will be time for questions. Suggest that the panelists take five to ten minutes for their individual stories. Assume that some will take more time, others less.

   Obviously, the more diverse the cultures that your program serves, the more diverse the information will be. However, just as any two people from the majority culture differ, so will any two people from a minority culture. This helps make the point that differences exist within a culture and from family to family.

   When the group is relaxed and receptive, the panelists will reveal fascinating information about their backgrounds. There will be some humor, some recognition of delightful similarities, and some genuine differences in approach to basic family issues. The key to this approach is that ideas are presented in context and represented by real people. This makes acceptance much easier.

3. Have the group make an audiotape about the usefulness of the panel's presentations. Share copies of the tape with all panel members.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

If it is not possible to have a parent panel, participants can individually interview the parents. Participants can develop interview questions in advance, perhaps relating to the parent's life as a child, cultural influences, and so forth. Be sure questions are respectful, not invasive, and that the interview setting is relaxed and informal. Ask the parent to bring anything from home that they want to share.

Activity 3–3: Both Sides Now

Purpose: In this activity, participants will recognize and reflect upon the goals that parents have for their children.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers

1. Divide participants into two groups: one representing parents and the other representing staff. Ask each group to develop a list of responses to the following statements, out of earshot of the other group:

   Parents: What I Want for My Child
   Staff: What I Want for Children

   Emphasize that each group should keep its perspective and remain in character as much as possible.

2. Have the groups share their lists. Sample responses follow:

Parents	Staff
To know my child is safe.	For children to feel accepted.
For my child to be treated fairly.	For children to have high self-esteem.
To have my child learn.	For children to develop properly.

Parents	Staff
To have my child learn to read, say ABCs, speak French, learn astrophysics, etc.	For children to learn things.
For my child to be treated specially.	For children to cooperate.
For my child to be served nutritious food.	For children to have appropriate toys and materials.
For my child to be in a germ-free environment.	For children to have a reasonably clean environment.
To know my child is loved.	

3. Based on the group's discussion and analysis, circle those responses that are similar on both lists. Mark any conflicts, such as safety vs. freedom, with an X. Discuss ways that these conflicts can show up in programs.

> **Trainer Preparation Notes:**
>
> These perspectives do not need to be seen as *at odds* because an effective program accommodates both. Emphasize the importance of knowing the families' goals for their children and of viewing them as a family strength.

4. Have the participants review the mission statement of their program to see if it reflects the goals that staff and parents have for children. If the mission statements do not cover these common goals, have the participants consider reworking them with the parent policy council.

Activity 3–4: Situation Cards

Purpose: In this activity, the participant examines his own values and beliefs about families and evaluates possible courses of action to take in various situations. The participant reviews hypothetical situations, makes judgements, and compares his responses with those of others.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Handout 10: Situation Cards

1. Give the participant a situation card from *Handout 10: Situation Cards* to review. The participant must then decide *what to do* and formulate reasons for doing so. Have the participant share his response and reasoning, and then give him feedback. You can indicate agreement/disagreement, pose additional questions, insights, and so forth. The situation cards are followed by suggestions for their use.

2. As a follow-up or alternative activity, have the participant use the situation cards to interview staff members, and then compile a list of best practices.

Activity 3–5: Principles and Practice

Purpose: In this activity, participants will apply the Seven Principles about Parents and Families to program materials, messages, and practices.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

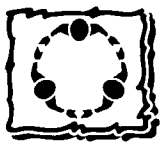
Chart paper, markers
Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families
Handout 12: Real Quotes from Real People—What's Wrong Here?

1. Post or distribute *Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families.* Discuss each principle using the background information at the beginning of this module. (Handout 11 duplicates this background information.)

2. Next, distribute or project on a screen *Handout 12: Real Quotes from Real People—What's Wrong Here?* Explain that these statements are from existing program materials or reflect comments made by actual staff members. Ask participants to consider each statement and discuss what might be wrong with it—specifically, which principle it violates. For example, the group may consider the first statement and conclude that, rather than supporting the goal of helping parents to nurture their children, it implies that parents are not expressing affection in their own way. The direction actually imposes an artificial way of expressing affection.

3. Ask each participant to pick the one principle that offers them the greatest opportunity for professional growth. Ask the participants to develop a two-week action plan based on that principle that describes how their personal and professional behavior will change.

Activity 3–6: Applying Principles



Purpose: In this activity, participants will support families in nurturing their children by applying the Seven Principles about Parents and Families.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families

1. On chart paper, list all the jobs represented among the participants. Create a grid and put Principles 1 through 7 across the top, as shown.

	Principle						
Job	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Home Visitor							
Driver							
Director							
Volunteer							
Parent Coordinator							

2. Review the principles stated in *Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families*. In small groups organized by job category, have participants brainstorm ways to apply each principle to support families in nurturing their children.

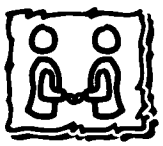
3. Have the whole group reconvene to complete the entire chart. An example of the first job is provided.

Principle

Job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Home Visitor	Form a partnership through informal conversation	Use home as a learning environment	Accept each family's values	Use needs assessment to develop family action plan	Help family set goals for child and family	Individualize services	Do not focus on a family's lack of motivation to do a certain thing; focus on finding out what family is willing to do
Driver							
Director							
Volunteer							
Parent Coordinator							

4. Have participants examine their job descriptions to see if they reflect opportunities to apply the principles in the ways the group has mentioned.

Activity 3–7: Self-Evaluation



Purpose: In this activity, the participant will design a self-evaluation and rating scale tool based on the Seven Principles about Parents and Families. As a result of creating this tool, the participant will gain a clearer understanding of what it takes to support the principles.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Paper, pens
Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families

1. Ask the participant to read, discuss, and create an evaluation statement of each principle listed on *Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families.* Decide ahead of time whether to use *always/sometimes/never* or *yes/no* format. For example:

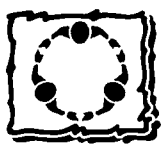
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Principle 1: I respect parents as primary educators.	_____	_____	_____
Principle 2: ...	_____	_____	_____

2. First, have the participant reflect on her work with families and then fill in the evaluation tool. Discuss the results and note areas of strength and areas requiring work.

3. Make a plan to repeat the self-evaluation at a later date.

4. Suggest that the participant organize a small group at her center to develop a similar simple program evaluation tool for use with the whole program.

Activity 3–8: Family Contacts



Purpose: In this activity, participants will recognize, through role play, how their interactions with families can support or contradict the Seven Principles about Parents and Families.

Outcome:

Participants identify and build on family strengths in nurturing children.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers
Form from *Model Family Needs Assessment Process*

1. Review the seven principles.

2. Distribute a familiar, well-used document such as the Intake Family Profile or any form in the *Model Family Needs Assessment Process* described in the *Resources* section of the guide.

3. Ask pairs of participants to role-play a parent-staff interview. Ask some pairs to follow the principles. Ask other pairs to deliberately ignore them.

4. Conclude by listing the positive and negative aspects of each interview. Note in particular how the use of language, gestures, tone, and behavior can either undermine or support parents' efforts to nurture their children. Remind the group to remember their primary goal of supporting families in this role, as they return to their program.

Trainer Preparation Notes:

Very often participants learn more from negative role-playing. It is sometimes easier to see rules being broken than to see them being followed.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Participants working independently or with other staff can build on the skills developed through this guide by completing activities such as the following one. Some of the activities can contribute to the participants' professional portfolios.

Evaluating Materials Sent to Parents

Have the participants gather all the materials they can find in your program that were recently sent or are routinely sent to parents. Ask participants to evaluate each piece of communication according to the following criteria:

- Warm tone
- Easily understood
- In family's home language
- Promotes a positive view of families
- Assumes parents are partners

Have the participants revise or improve these materials as necessary and then include them in their portfolios.

Possible Portfolio Entry: Revised written communication to parents

Handout 10: Situation Cards

Situation Card 1

A grandmother approaches you and complains loudly about the treatment of her granddaughter. She says other children pick on her, she is not learning anything, and no one helped her when she lost her sweater.

What do you do?

Situation Card 2

You are in a meeting and you hear a parent and teacher disagree about what to do when a child is hit by another child. The teacher tells the mother, *Your child must not hit back, but she must report being hit to me.* The mother replies very emphatically, *I tell my daughter to hit back. I don't want her running to you every time she's in trouble.*

What do you do?

Situation Card 3

Rena comes to the program every day wearing a lovely, but fragile, dress. It is trimmed in metallic thread and has lots of thin fabric that catches on play equipment. Her mother obviously takes great pride in her daughter's appearance. As a volunteer who helps supervise outdoor play, you feel a need to say something to her mother.

How do you approach her?

Situation Card 4

You have invited someone from the school system to talk to parents about their children's transition to kindergarten. You hope that the approach will welcome parents and assure them that the school will continue to support families. The person coming tells you that she plans to tell parents that they must nurture their children and teach them about seriation, classification, and phonics.

What do you do?

Note: Use with Activity 3–4

Handout 10: Situation Cards—
Coach Preparation Notes

Coach Preparation Notes: **Situation Card 1**

Possible responses may include:

— Ignore her—the woman is overwrought.

— Tell her that those things could not possibly have happened.

— Acknowledge that she is upset; continue to listen; follow up when possible.

Help the participant to explore various alternatives.

Coach Preparation Notes: **Situation Card 2**

Possible responses may include:

— Pretend you do not hear this disagreement.

— Side with the teacher, pointing out that one obviously cannot encourage hitting.

— Support the parent by saying, *I appreciate that you want your daughter to stand up for herself and not to be dependent on the teacher. I can help her do that without hitting.*

Help the participant to explore various alternatives.

Note: Use with Activity 3–4

Handout 10: Situation Cards—
Coach Preparation Notes (Continued)

Coach Preparation Notes: **Situation Card 3**

Possible responses may include:

— Say, *I like the way that you keep Rena proud and aware of her home culture. Her dress is distinctive.*

— Offer, *Would you like to bring extra clothes for her to play in outside? Or would you like for her to wear one of our smocks to protect her dress?*

— Say something like, *Don't you think Rena would rather look like the other children instead of wearing a costume?*

Help the participant to explore various alternatives.

Coach Preparation Notes: **Situation Card 4**

Possible responses may include:

— Assume that the school system representative knows best.

— Find another speaker.

— Explain that you wanted something different.

Help the participant to explore various alternatives.

Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families

1. Parents are already involved and are the primary influence in the lives of children.

You have all heard that *the parent is the child's first teacher.* While this is certainly true, parents are much, much more. Families, not programs, are the center of children's lives; your job is to take cues from families to create programs and environments that reflect the cultures, strengths, and desires of families. All children identify with their families. Therefore, the attitudes that you have toward families and the degree of respect that you give them speaks volumes.

2. Parents play a distinctly different role in the lives of children than do staff members.

The saying that *the parent is the child's first teacher* is understood by some to mean that parents should be more like teachers in the program. The saying can even be stretched to include the suggestion that parents continue school-type activities (some inappropriate in themselves) at home. You need to remember that children coming to your program have learned quite a bit with the support of their *first teachers.* The methods that these teachers use seem to work pretty well as evidenced by the language, social, and motor skills of the children. True, these teachers may lack complete objectivity when it comes to their children, and how very grateful you can all be for that! Parents bring a special *irrational* caring for their child and intense emotional response. Staff members bring another kind of caring that is warm and affectionate but with more emotional distance. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner says that children need both rational and irrational caring and that they expect more of the first kind from early childhood programs and the second kind at home.

3. It is not possible to accurately generalize about parents.

Parents, after all, are people—with all of the complexities, physical and cultural differences, individual characteristics, and personal histories of any population. Parents are not a group, and it is dangerous to assume very much about them. They are hard-working, laid-back, silly, straight-laced, outgoing, reserved, liberal, conservative, tired, energized, humorous, serious, innocent, wise, artistic, and mechanical. Each family expresses culture differently. As staff members, you need to take time to get to know family members as individuals so that you can support their goals for their children.

4. Parents have strengths.

So many negative statements and attitudes about parents abound today that it seems necessary to point this out. Do parents also have shortcomings? Sure—they are people; but as staff members, you must be very cautious about assuming a *deficit perspective,* a view that families need to be *fixed,* especially when this view is based on income level or ethnicity. You also need to be cautious about looking everywhere but at yourself when seeking to improve the lives of children. It is too easy to blame families as the cause of children's problems instead of focusing on doing the very best as a staff member in your program. Mainly, it is just not useful to evaluate and judge the people you are working with as partners. Your job is to get to know families, noting and building upon their strengths. A continuing challenge is to check your biases at the door.

Note: Use with Activities 3–5, 3–6, and 3–7

Handout 11: Seven Principles about Parents and Families (Continued)

5. Parents have something to offer staff members.

Too often, staff-parent exchanges are viewed simply as a means of informing parents about their child. In reality, while staff members bring information about child development and their experience with many children of a particular age, family members bring information about the individual child across time and in a variety of settings. In an open, trusting relationship, families can also share the important events and occurrences that make up a child's daily life. Finally, in a multicultural community, families offer staff members the opportunity to broaden their personal horizons and experience the richness of cultural diversity.

6. Today's families experience many demands.

It is important to recognize the ordinary, routine demands that many families with young children face as they go about the business of meeting their practical and emotional needs. Adequate employment, housing, health care, and transportation are often major issues for families. For recent arrivals to this country, language can make accessing even basic necessities a huge challenge. Employed parents simply add another job to the one they are already doing. They undertake hair-raising schedules in an effort to *do it all.* These schedules may not include time for leisure, for self, or for adequate sleep. Therefore, *it is a real mistake to interpret parents' lack of availability to a program as lack of concern for their child.*

7. There are *many* ways for parents to be involved.

It is time to broaden the concept of what parent involvement really means. It is time to stop evaluating success in terms of how many parents attend a program event or their willingness to carry out a home assignment, such as *read two books to your child* or *give your child a hug today.* Your challenge is to be flexible and creative enough to provide a wide range of options so that families can participate in their children's lives and choose the level and type of involvement that is best for them.

Handout 12: Real Quotes from Real People—What's Wrong Here?

- A parent receives a calendar of activities from her child's program. On Wednesday, it says, *Smile at your child and tell her you love her.*

- *When parents come into the classroom to help—well, I have a hard time with this. When I plan an activity, I plan very specific goals; I use a certain kind of language and emphasize certain concepts.*

- *Time and commitment show love to a child. If parents really care about their child, then they will attend program events.*

- *Programs need to define the roles and responsibilities for parents.*

- *The best way for parents to be involved is to reinforce at home what the child learns at the program.*

- *Parents are a child's first teachers.*

- *I finally get him all straightened out by Friday. Then he goes home for the weekend, and I have to start all over again on Monday.*

- *Most mothers today are not paying enough attention to what their children wear, what they eat, or how much sleep they get. The children don't get proper discipline at home; that's why they have so many behavior problems in the program.*

- *To get children ready for school, parents should practice routines with them at home like raising their hands to go to the bathroom.*

Note: Use with Activity 3–5

Continuing Professional Development

Participants can undertake many activities that they can use over the course of the year to complement and build upon the skills developed in this guide.

College Courses

Community colleges offer both beginning and advanced courses in child development and in implementing programs for young children. These courses may also offer more detailed information on developmental stages and current research findings about young children. Courses may be taken for credit or as continuing adult education.

Workshops

Other courses and workshops related to child development are offered through organizations such as the Red Cross, local libraries, museums, local chapters of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or county extension agencies. Such courses can address child safety, first aid, children's literature, children's science activities, and a range of other topics that will assist staff in providing appropriate experiences for young children.

CDA Program

The Child Development Associate (CDA), a credentialing program for early childhood professionals, recognizes training and the demonstration of key competencies in the field of child development. For more information, contact the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition at 1–800–424–4310, or write the Council at 2460 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009–3575.

In-Service Training

Participants will find many opportunities for continued professional development through monthly staff development meetings or peer support systems within their programs. College courses on child development can even be designed to meet the needs of Head Start staff. Such extended efforts require the commitment of the program administrators and may use many of the follow-up activities suggested in this guide.

The works cited below have collectively influenced the field's understanding of child development and provide the philosophical underpinnings of many of the activities in this guide. It is recommended that the trainer be familiar with the works' basic contents and make their availability known to participants who need further information.

Bredekamp, Sue, ed. ***Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8: Expanded Edition.*** **Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992.**

This volume offers and clearly defines appropriate and inappropriate practice in its descriptions of environments and interactions with children from infancy through the early years. It discusses professional consensus about the best quality of care and education to support the development of each child's full potential.

Bredekamp, Sue, and Teresa Rosegrant, eds. ***Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children.*** **Vol 1. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1992.**

This book presents principles about what to include in curriculums for young children and how to assess their learning. It emphasizes the potential of all children and that of early childhood teachers and administrators to become caring, creative professionals.

Bukatko, Danuta, and Marvin W. Daehler. ***Child Development: A Topical Approach.*** **Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.**

This comprehensive text covers a wide spectrum of child development information. It discusses the controversies and diversity of opinions in this dynamic field. Developmental domains and influences are presented and considered from various perspectives.

Derman-Sparks, Louise, and the A.B.C. Task Force. ***Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children.*** **Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989.**

A task force of early childhood educators compiled a set of principles and methodology for teachers and parents to instill in themselves and children a respect for differences and an approach for confronting unfairness. The curriculum goals include constructing a confident self-identity, and developing just interaction with diversity, critical thinking, and the skills to stand up for oneself and others.

Elkind, David. *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

This contemporary classic makes clear the unique nature of the mind of a preschool child and shows how a healthy education supports and encourages the learning process. The book also warns us of the consequences of the *superkid* syndrome and the potential danger of harmful practices.

Feeney, Stephanie, Doris Christensen, and Eva Moravcik. *Who Am I in the Lives of Children? An Introduction to Teaching Young Children.* New York: Macmillan, 1991.

This document contains practical approaches to early childhood education. It is organized into five sections: foundations of early childhood education, understanding children, living and learning with children, the curriculum, and special relationships.

Gordon, Thomas. *P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training.* New York: New American Library, 1975.

This classic offers practical help for parents, providing skills and usable methods for parents to use to improve communication and support the growth of their children.

Gordon, Thomas. *T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training.* New York: P.H. Wyden, 1974.

This book offers teachers the methods for developing more effective communication with students and methods of discipline based upon respect and responsibility.

Kagan, Jerome. *The Nature of the Child.* New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984.

This book explores guiding themes in human development, development as a sequence of stages, the preservation of individual qualities, and the establishment of morality.

Mallory, Bruce L., and Rebecca S. New, eds. *Diversity and Developmentally Appropriate Practices: Challenges for Early Childhood Education.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1994.

This book expands the current definition of developmentally appropriate practices. It addresses the needs of young children with cultural and developmental differences. Contributors include Barbara T. Bowman, Carol Brunson Phillips, Douglas R. Powell, and Samuel J. Meisels.

Phillips, Carol Brunson, ed. ***Essentials for Child Development Associates Working with Young Children.*** **Washington, D.C.: Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, 1991.**

This book has eight units based on the Child Development Associates Competency Standards. It contains information about what defines competent teachers of young children. It discusses the early childhood profession, stages of child development, and preparation for assessment as a child development associate. The book contains NAEYC's Statement of Commitment and the Code of Ethical Conduct, as well as a list of members and available resource information.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. ***Model Family Needs Assessment Process: Instruments.*** **Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1991.**

This Head Start publication is a compilation of model instruments for Family Needs Assessments.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. ***User's Guide for a Partnership with Parents.*** **Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993.**

This Head Start publication includes information for home visitors, including establishing and maintaining partnerships, using the home as a learning environment, developing long-term and short-term goals, and individualizing services for families.

York, Stacy. ***Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs.*** **St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1991.**

This book contains practical ideas for implementing multicultural education. York establishes a conceptual framework for multicultural education and its tie with good early childhood education practices. She defines the stages of children's awareness of differences and development of prejudice and discusses the effects of prejudice on all children.

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